

Polly T. Donald Enrichment Fund 2021-2022

Each year, Friends School makes an award to one or more staff members from the Polly T. Donald Enrichment Fund. Generous parents and community donors created this fund as a tribute to former head of school, Polly Donald. The fund provides a unique opportunity for faculty and staff to revitalize and grow outside of the classroom. Polly believes that an individual's personal growth inevitably enriches those with whom they come into contact. The fund aims to revitalize and inspire and support personal growth, enriching the Friends School community at large.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the 2020-2021 recipients of the Polly T. Donald Enrichment Fund delayed their experiences until 2022.



5th grade teacher **Leigh Houser** - Leigh completed a 200 hour Yoga Teacher Training. This comprehensive program included the history, philosophy, anatomy, energies, ethics and business of yoga.

I joined Friends School 8 years ago and when I learned of the exciting possibilities that the Polly T Donald Fund could provide, I knew right away what I would propose. I have been pursuing my personal yoga practice for more than twenty years, and it has proved to be a place of solace and rejuvenation in many ways. Teaching is such rewarding work, but it also requires an exhaustive outpouring of mental and emotional attention. And after nearly twenty years in the classroom, my yoga mat has served as a faithful place to ground me back to the head, hand and heart of myself. At Friends we talk a lot about Head, Hand, Heart and Mindfulness-based Social Emotional Learning, and we must practice what we preach. In order to show up as my best self for the kids this pursuing yoga as a form of self care has truly been a gift over the decades.

The PTD Fund afforded me the opportunity to gain my 200 Hour Yoga Teacher Training while also gaining a curriculum that I can use in the classroom for yoga as a foundation for Social Emotional Learning and mindfulness. I've already begun incorporating it into my classroom and the rewards have been great! I have a group of faithful yogis who choose to practice regularly in their own time during the day and the kids look forward to our weekly yoga sessions. Seeing them confidently teach their parents yoga during Student Led Conferences was a highlight.

But more personally, the PTD Fund paid for a year long membership to a local yoga studio where I can further my own personal practice. It's been a gift that has continued to give throughout the entire year and I'm very grateful for the opportunities it has provided.



Elementary Program Head **Krysten Fort-Catanese** - Krysten attended a Spanish immersion program in Oaxaca City, Mexico. There she improved her Spanish, explored the archeological sites, outdoor markets, incredible food and vibrant culture of the region.

I have been working in progressive education for over 25 years. My passion for this profession started in Santa Monica, California and eventually took me to Phuket, Thailand where I helped to start the United World College, a preschool-12th grade International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. The next chapter of my career brought me to Friends School in Boulder, CO. So, I am sure it did not come as a shock to anyone that my PTD Fund application focused on international travel.



I had many reasons for choosing Oaxaca City, Mexico, including 1) my dearest friend is from there 2) it is a foodie's paradise 3) it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and 4) one of my mid-life resolutions is to learn more Spanish. It also worked out that while I was there, the incredibly beautiful Guelagueta Festival

was happening! This is an annual celebration where people from all over the region come to celebrate their different customs, traditions, and culinary delights. I was so delighted when I got news of receiving this grant. It was so energizing and inspiring to be abroad again!



I am so grateful to the PTD Fund and Committee for supporting me in this endeavor. We are all so

very fortunate to be in a school that sees all of us as whole people, wants us to flourish, and encourages us to be the best we can be - head, hand, heart. And I highly recommend putting Oaxaca City on your travel bucket list!! Call me if you do ;)